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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/004,799	12/07/2001	Yoshiaki Usami	N9450.0037 /P037	7617
24998	7590	03/13/2007	EXAMINER	
DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO LLP 1825 EYE STREET NW Washington, DC 20006-5403			DESHPANDE, KALYAN K	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3623	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/13/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/004,799	USAMI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Kalyan K. Deshpande	3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 December 2006.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-7 and 11-13 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-13 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. The following is a non-final office action in response to the communications received on December 12, 2006. Claims 1-7 and 11-13 are now pending in this application, claims 11-13 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 8-10 have been cancelled.

Application History

2. Applicants initiated an interview on July 11, 2006. Applicants submitted preliminary amendments on April 03, 2002 that are not in the application file. An office action regarding the claims submitted December 07, 2001 including the cancellation of claims 8-10 submitted on July 26, 2002 was mailed on February 16, 2002. Applicants have a postcard confirming receipt of the preliminary amendments by the Patent and Trademark Office. Receipt of the preliminary amendments and the postcard dating the USPTO's receipt of the preliminary amendments from Applicants is acknowledged. The present invention was restricted on August 17, 2006 and Applicants have elected claims 1-7 with traverse.

Election/Restrictions

3. Applicant's election with traverse of claims 1-7 in the reply filed on December 12, 2006 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the pending claims can be examined without serious burden. This is not found persuasive because there exists distinct subject matter the recited inventions and there is potential for even further

divergence of subject matter on future amendments to the present inventions, both of which places a serious burden on examination. The requirement is still deemed proper.

Response to Amendments

4. Applicants' preliminary amendments to claims 6 and 7 on April 3, 2002 are acknowledged. Examiner acknowledges Applicants' cancellation of claims 8-10.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claim 5 and 6 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 5 recites "a building group management service support system". Claim 5 is dependant on either claim 3 or 4. Claims 3 and 4 recite "a building group management service support device". It is not clear how claim 5 claiming a system draws on claim 3 or claim 4 which are devices.

Claim 6 recites a "computer program storage medium". Claim 6 depends claim 3, which recites "a building group management service support device". It is unclear how claim 6 claiming a storage medium draws on claim 3 which recites a device.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Labedz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6993576) in further view of Watson (U.S. Patent No. 6581045).

As per claim 1, Labedz teaches:

A building group management service support method for managing facilities composed of a plurality of maintenance subjects using a computer system by a facility manager entrusted with operations of a plurality of maintenance companies for executing maintenance for each of said maintenance subjects for said facilities from a facility owner having said facilities, and said computer system is connected to a facility owner terminal and a facility manager terminal via a network (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, and figures 2-7; where a maintenance system for managing facilities is provided. The system includes a client (facility manager) entrusted with creating and scheduling maintenance tasks for those living at the facility. The client machines, servers, and database are all connected via the Internet.), and

said facility manager terminal extracts maintenance service characteristics of each of said maintenance companies, decides combinations of maintenance companies having same said service characteristics of all said maintenance subjects as maintenance plans, decides evaluation for operations of said facilities as facility operation evaluation on the basis of maintenance information including a fault time or fault contents output from said facilities, and indicates said plurality of

maintenance plans and said facility operation evaluation on said facility owner terminal (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, column 10 lines 35-59, and figures 2-7 and 10; where the client has access to the maintenance clearinghouse. The system also provides for inspection scheduling of facilities in order to determine whether maintenance is needed.), and

said facility manager terminal selects a maintenance plan entrusted with management from said plurality of maintenance plans and notifies said facility manager terminal of said maintenance plan (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, column 10 lines 35-59, and figures 2-7 and 10; where the client (facility manager) selects and schedules appropriate maintenance for the facilities. Since the client (facility manager) selects the maintenance operations, he is already notified.).

Labedz fails to explicitly teach a "facility owner terminal selects a maintenance plan". Watson teaches a "facility owner selects a maintenance plan" (see column 25 lines 19-41). The advantage to having the facility owner select a maintenance plan, as opposed to the facility manager, is that the selected maintenance plan has the entrusted support from ownership furthering the precision and organization of the system. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of a facility owner selecting a maintenance place taught by Watson to the facility maintenance management system taught by Labedz in order to

entrust support from ownership furthering the precision and organization of the system, which is a goal of Labedz (see column 1 lines 35-40).

As per claim 2, Labedz teaches:

A building group management service support method according to claim 1, wherein said computer system includes a facility user terminal connected via said network and said facility manager terminal requests a user questionnaire for entering a degree of use satisfaction to a facility user using said facilities, decides an analytical result of said user questionnaire as user evaluation, and when said maintenance plan and said facility operation evaluation are to be indicated on said facility owner terminal, indicates said user evaluation (see column 10 lines 35-59 and figures 8C,10, and 13; where the user pre-defines an inspection template. The user uses the template to determine satisfactory completion of tasks. The template consists of a list of tasks to be completed for the job. The template is the same as a questionnaire, especially since it holds specific questions for users to evaluate.

Figure 8C displays how user satisfaction is entered using a point system to indicate good, satisfactory, marginal, or poor satisfaction.).

As per claim 3, Labedz teaches:

A building group management service support device for buildings for managing facilities composed of a plurality of maintenance subjects using a computer system by a facility manager by trust with operations of a plurality of maintenance companies for executing maintenance for each of said maintenance subjects for said facilities from a facility owner having said facilities, wherein said computer system is

connected to a facility owner terminal and a facility manager terminal via a network (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, and figures 2-7; where a maintenance system for managing facilities is provided. The system includes a client (facility manager) entrusted with creating and scheduling maintenance tasks for those living at the facility. The client machines, servers, and database are all connected via the Internet.), and

 said facility manager terminal has a maintenance service combination display unit for displaying, from a result of extraction of maintenance service characteristics of each of said maintenance companies, a result of decision as a combination of maintenance companies having same said service characteristics of all said maintenance subjects and a facility operation evaluation display unit for displaying evaluation decided for said facility operation on the basis of maintenance information including a fault time or fault contents output from said facilities (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, column 10 lines 35-59, and figures 2-7 and 10; where the client has access to the maintenance clearinghouse. The system also provides for inspection scheduling of facilities in order to determine whether maintenance is needed.), and

 said facility manager terminal selects a maintenance plan entrusted with management from said plurality of maintenance plans and notifies said facility manager terminal of said maintenance plan (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, column 10 lines 35-59, and figures 2-7 and 10; where the client (facility manager) selects and schedules

appropriate maintenance for the facilities. Since the client (facility manager) selects the maintenance operations, he is already notified.).

Labedz fails to teach a "facility owner terminal selects a maintenance plan". Watson teaches "facility owner selects a maintenance plan" (see column 25 lines 19-41). Claim 3 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 1; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

As per claim 4, Labedz teaches:

A building group management service support device according to claim 3, wherein said facility owner terminal has a user evaluation display unit for requesting a user questionnaire and deciding an analytical result of said user questionnaire as user evaluation, and displaying said user evaluation (see column 10 lines 35-59 and figures 8C, 10, and 13; where the user pre-defines an inspection template. The user uses the template to determine satisfactory completion of tasks. The template consists of a list of tasks to be completed for the job. The template is the same as a questionnaire, especially since it holds specific questions for users to evaluate. The system displays the current checklist, saved checklists, and enables the user to modify the checklists. Figure 8C displays how user satisfaction is entered using a point system to indicate good, satisfactory, marginal, or poor satisfaction.).

As per claim 5, Labedz teaches:

A building group management service support system, wherein input/output data in said maintenance service combination display unit, or said facility operation evaluation display unit, or said user evaluation display unit, or said maintenance plan

selection unit which are described in claim 3 or 4 is registered in a server connected to said network (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, and figures 2-7; where all client terminals, servers, and clearing warehouse are connected a network and the Internet) and

 said facility manager terminal, or said facility owner terminal, or said maintenance company terminal, or said facility user terminal refers to said input/output data via said network (see column 2 lines 4-18, column 3 lines 37-59, column 4 lines 38-50, column 5 lines 40-55, and figures 2-7; where all client terminals, servers, and clearing warehouse are connected a network and the Internet).

As per claim 6, Labedz teaches:

 A computer program storage medium which is a program storage medium for storing a computer program capable of being read by a computer stores a program code of said device or said system described in claim 3 (see column 4 lines 65-67, column 5 lines 1-40 and figure 2; where the computer program can be stored on any client machines or servers and data is stored in the database.).

As per claim 7, Labedz fails to teach “facility operation evaluation and said user evaluation is executed by a terminal of an evaluation company which is a third person independent from any of said facility manager and said maintenance companies”. It is old and well-known in the art to have 3rd parties review user evaluations. The advantage of allowing a 3rd party to review user evaluations is that the third party can neutrally view the evaluations to render an accurate analysis of customer satisfaction. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, for one of ordinary skill in the art

to enable a 3rd party to review user evaluations in order to render a more accurate analysis of user satisfaction, which is a goal of Labedz (see column 1 line 25-29).

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following are pertinent to the current invention, though not relied upon:

Watson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6581045) teaches an asset management system is disclosed, and is adapted for use to rate the condition of a physical asset component, such as a roof, estimate the service life of the asset, and provide a basis for decisions regarding the selection of repair alternatives and/or replacement options associated with the asset.

Cornett et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5216612) teaches an intelligent computer integrated maintenance system and method includes an electronically stored parts manual which contains a hierarchical listing of all parts in production machines, and a maintenance operations computer controller which includes a maintenance schedule management subsystem, an engineering change control subsystem, a parts manual management subsystem and a spares inventory management subsystem.

Vines et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6006171) teaches a computerized maintenance management system for the process control environment which integrates a CMMS system with a process control system.

Piety et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6192325) teaches a computerized method and apparatus which enables a user, even one who has little or no predictive maintenance

skills, to establish a predictive maintenance database that defines information needed to monitor equipment in accordance with a predictive maintenance plan.

Honma et al. (U.S Patent No. 5343387) teaches a cyclical maintenance schedule.

Kalantar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6954737) teaches a system and method are shown for work management for facility maintenance. The system includes a central management server configured to receive a first set of information including tasks to be performed at a first facility and to generate a first work schedule for a first user selected to perform the first work schedule at the first facility.

Usher et al. (Usher, John S.; Kamal, Ahmed H.; Syed, Wasim Hashmi; "Cost Optimal Preventive Maintenance and Replacement Scheduling", *IEE Transactions*, December 1998, pp. 1121-1128) teaches a method for predicting a cost-optimal preventive maintenance policy.

Gopalakrishnan et al. (Gopalakrishnan, Mohan; Ahire, Sanjay L.; Miller, David M.; "Maximizing the Effectiveness of a Preventive Maintenance System: An Adaptive Modeling Approach", *Management Science*, June 1997, pp. 827-840) teaches an adaptive preventive maintenance management schedule which maximizes savings subject to workforce constraints.

Eade (Eade, Robert; "Software Makes CMMs Versatile, Flexible"; *Quality*, May 1995, pp. 20-26) teaches the development of software to manage maintenance systems.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kalyan K. Deshpande whose telephone number is (571)272-5880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


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